



# **Blackford County**

## **Arts & Culture Master Plan**

**2025 - 2035**



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## About

This plan is one-third of a regional arts and cultural planning project that includes Blackford and Jay Counties in Indiana and Auglaize County in Ohio.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) through their “Our Town” grant and fiscally managed by Arts Place, Inc., the consultant team facilitated a community-driven planning process for each county providing opportunity to coordinate strategic efforts beyond individual boundaries.

Blackford and Jay County plans will also feed into a larger East Central Indiana regional Arts & Cultural plan to be completed fall 2025. That work is part of Indiana’s READI Arts Initiative as funded by the Lilly Endowment.

# Our Town — National Endowment for the Arts

Our Town project seeks to:

“Provide opportunities for the arts to be integrated into the fabric of community life — **Strengthening Communities.**”

Our Town project outcomes may include:

## Economic Change:

Economic improvements of individuals, institutions, or the community including local business growth, job creation/labor force participation, professional development/training, prevention of displacement, in-migration, and tourism.

## Physical Change:

Physical improvements that occur to the built and natural environment including beautification and/or enhancement of physical environment, new construction, and redevelopment (including arts, culture, and public space).

## Social Change:

Improvements to social relationships, civic engagement and community empowerment, and/or amplifying community identity including civic engagement, collective efficacy, social capital, social cohesion, and community attachment.

## System Change:

Improvements to community capacity to sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into strategies for advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes including, for example: establishment of new and lasting cross-sector partnerships; shifts in institutional structure, practices or policies; replication or scaling of innovative project models; establishment of training programs; or dissemination of informational resources to support the creative placemaking field.



<https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town/strengthening-communities>



## READI Arts Initiative Goals

Engage residents and communities across boundaries of creative disciplines, geography and demographics.

Unleash regional creative transformation through investment in public art and cultural amenities that are accessible to the entire community.

Elevate READI's quality of place impact on Indiana's cities and towns.

Build a critical mass of authentic, yet bold, artistic and cultural assets with a long-term plan for their maintenance and expansion.



<https://indianareadi.com/resources>



# Welcome

## Why Have an Arts Plan

**The purpose of this plan is to enhance quality of life, strengthen the local economy, and provide an important — often missing — piece to community planning in Blackford County. It provides a long-term, strategic roadmap of goals, strategies, and resources to guide action throughout the county.**

# How to Use the Arts Plan

## Start with Priorities.

Readers should view goals and strategies as a matrix in which many things can be happening at once as opposed to a linear plan of attack (Goal 1, then 2, etc.). That said, the document “stars” goals and strategies prioritized by county residents.



- Start with priorities and small, visible projects to capture attention.
- Follow the momentum to gain more support and identify next steps.

## Follow the Timeline AND Opportunities.

Funding is much easier to secure when tied to a plan, and opportunities come in a variety of forms, from newly formed partnerships to an enthusiastic community member.

- Focus on prioritized areas within the first 2 years to maximize community interest and engagement.
- Early success will be crucial to drive early buy-in, build momentum, enthusiasm, and demonstrate the plan’s potential.
- Take advantage of opportunities as they arise, even if they are out of sync with action plans. Opportunities missed may not return.

## Use the Resources.

Use the resources included in the appendix to work smarter not harder. The asset inventory is also a helpful way to find potential partners and opportunities.

## Implement Collaboratively & Thoughtfully.

Successful implementation will require a thoughtful leadership structure, including:


- An Arts Plan Implementation Team of key stakeholders (beginning with planning participants) not to execute every aspect of the plan, but instead to foster awareness, build partnerships, inspire, and maintain steady forward motion;
- A designated individual or entity to coordinate the team’s efforts and track implementation; and
- Funding to support the process.

“Arts bind people to place and each other.”

Alberto Ibarguen, President | The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, 2018



# Concepts We Use

This process brought together arts organizations and professionals, civic and elected leaders, economic development, and community. This was a new combination for most participants – one that lead each to share new concepts with the others. We carried the following into this plan: 

**Placemaking** is a collaborative process that strengthens the bond between people and shared spaces. It goes beyond urban design by fostering creative uses of public spaces and honoring their physical and cultural identities.

**Creative Placemaking** focuses on strengthening communities with arts at the core.

**Creative Economy** is the crossroads of creativity, culture, and commerce – workers in arts occupations, creative industries, and places. Creative economies thrive when a wide array of industries and workers are treated as active participants in it.

**Philanthropy** is the voluntary giving by individuals or groups to promote the common good, often through financial donations or time, with the aim of benefiting others and fostering a more civil and just society.

**Quality of Place** the characteristics of a community or region that make it attractive and desirable to live, work, and visit, including both tangible and intangible factors like environment, culture, and social connections.

**Stakeholders** are those who may benefit or be affected by a project. They may or may not take part directly in the decision-making process of that project.



Definitions adapted from:

<https://www.pps.org>

<https://www.creativeplacemaking.us>

<https://patternindy.com>

<https://rural.indiana.edu/>

<https://artsandplanning.mapc.org/glossary-of-terms/>





# Placemaking Tool: Portable Art Studios

The NEA Our Town grant that funded this plan, also funded creation of portable “art studios.” Why? Blackford Counties rural geography demands that organizations and artist facilitators practice creative placemaking by bringing the arts directly into the neighborhoods and communities they serve.

Over time, these colorful, adaptable (kid height or adult height) studios will become recognizable visual cues for events and organizations throughout the county that ART IS HAPPENING HERE! Available for organizations and organizers to “check out” they will support public engagement in the arts as a:

- Portable art installation and place to create
- Landing spot for information and recognizable brand for plan activities



For More Information Contact

Arts Place: Blackford County Arts Center (765) 348-4154 or [bcac@myartsplace.org](mailto:bcac@myartsplace.org)



# Executive Summary

Rural communities thrive when they celebrate their unique character, build strong connections, and create opportunities for people to live, work, and engage. Placemaking — **using arts and culture to shape public spaces and community life** — is a powerful tool for strengthening local identity, fostering economic growth, and attracting and retaining residents.

This plan provides a roadmap for integrating creativity into broader community development efforts, ensuring that arts and culture are —not just valued, but — essential to long-term success. By aligning cultural initiatives with economic, social, and infrastructure goals, communities can revitalize downtowns, create engaging public spaces, and preserve their heritage — making them more vibrant, welcoming, and resilient.

**With a foundation of successful initiatives and a shared vision for the future, Blackford County is well-positioned to harness the power of arts and culture to drive community growth and connection.**

When it comes to rural arts access and creative development, economic growth and sustainability are not only about recruiting businesses to establish and bring jobs.

Rural economic resiliency is aided by strong local leadership combined with community vision and branding.

Rural economies succeed when communities understand themselves—who they are and what they have to offer.

Not only does a strong creative identity engender local community pride, it creates a brand that attracts visitors and future residents.

**Cross Sector Strategies for Creative Rural Development**

**National Association of State Arts Agencies, 2025**



# What We Learned

Blackford County is home to key arts and cultural assets including Arts Place, Weiler Plaza, the county history center, signature festivals, public art, and trails. Hartford City and Montpelier are dedicated to downtown revitalization, have a groundswell of successful efforts to build upon (public art, placemaking, beautification projects, façade improvement, city arts council), and others in the works that align well with goals and strategies within this plan.

Plan goals and strategies directly support Blackford County's solid foundation in arts and culture by advancing placemaking, community engagement, and sustainability:

**Creative Placemaking Downtown** builds on existing revitalization efforts through public art, beautification, and programming.



**Youth Engagement In & Through the Arts** ensures the next generation engages in and benefits from the arts.

**Creative Economy & Entrepreneurs** drive arts, cultural, and economic vitality through creativity, enterprise, and community investment.

**Cultural Identity & Heritage** strengthens local traditions, history, and festivals.

**Sustained Commitment & Implementation** secures long-term investment, leadership, and collaboration to keep arts initiatives thriving.

Together, these efforts enhance Blackford County's vibrancy, economic growth, and community pride.

# Goals & Strategies

## 1 CREATIVE PLACEMAKING DOWNTOWN

Blackford County's downtowns are thriving — revitalized through arts initiatives, beautification, and programming.

**STRATEGY 1.1** — Beautify all the “small” stuff for civic pride and engagement.

**STRATEGY 1.2** — Activate with public art, partnerships, events, and opportunities to create.

**STRATEGY 1.3** — Connect activities, places, and people.

## 2 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN & THROUGH THE ARTS

Blackford County's youth are thriving through the arts and civic participation.

**STRATEGY 2.1** — Increase opportunities for youth arts engagement.

**STRATEGY 2.2** — Increase youth access to arts.

**STRATEGY 2.3** — Increase youth stake in the arts.

## 3 CREATIVE ECONOMY & ENTREPRENEURS

All benefit from a thriving creative economy with increasing numbers of successful creative entrepreneurs and groups.

**STRATEGY 3.1** — Build support systems and training opportunities.

**STRATEGY 3.2** — Create spaces for creatives.

## 4 CULTURAL IDENTITY & HERITAGE

Blackford County's identity has been strengthened through the arts, history, and community engagement.

**STRATEGY 4.1** — Reimagine and strengthen signature festival traditions.

**STRATEGY 4.2** — Lean into Blackford County's history and heritage.


## 5 SUSTAINED COMMITMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Arts initiatives and programming are sustained through collaboration, leadership, and long-term funding.

**STRATEGY 5.1** — Increase support for arts and culture.

**STRATEGY 5.2** — Solidify long-term investment pathways for arts and culture.

**STRATEGY 5.3** — Include arts elements and arts stakeholders when implementing related existing plan strategies.

 Stars highlight goals and strategies prioritized by county residents.



"Franklin" by Pat McAtee, Hartford City | Photo provided by Scott Shaffer of The News Times



# The Plan: A Vibrant Arts & Culture Future for Blackford

The purpose of this plan is to enhance quality of life, strengthen the local economy, and provide an important — often missing — piece to community planning.

It provides a long-term, strategic roadmap of goals, strategies, and appendices with details and resources to strengthen local identity, foster economic growth, and attract and retain residents.

As leaders implement the plan, there are some basic placemaking principles to serve as a guide.

- 1 **Start with Petunias.** In other words, keep it small, simple, and visible through a “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approach for early, obvious wins.
- 2 **They Always Say, “It Can’t Be Done.”**
- 3 **Community Engagement.** Involve residents in planning and decision-making to ensure that projects reflect local values and needs. This participation fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens community bonds.
- 4 **Cross-Sector Collaboration.** Partner with various sectors—such as local businesses, government agencies, and nonprofits—to pool resources and expertise, amplifying the impact of placemaking efforts.
- 5 **Asset-Based Development.** Identify and utilize local talents, traditions, and resources. This approach builds on what the community already has, leading to sustainable development.
- 6 **Flexibility and Adaptability.** Be open to evolving ideas and feedback. This adaptability allows projects to remain relevant and responsive to changing community dynamics.
- 7 **Focus on Quality of Place.** Enhance public spaces to make them more inviting and functional. Improvements like parks, community centers, and public art can boost residents’ pride and attract newcomers.

## Sources:

[Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places](#)

[Rural Placemaking and the Thrive Rural Framework](#)

[Creative Placemaking Resources](#)

[Placemaking, Wikipedia](#)

“

Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

National Endowment for the Arts. *Creative Placemaking*. 2010



Art classes in the park, Montpelier



# Blackford County Arts & Culture

The process identified key strengths, needs, and opportunities.

## Community Assets & Strengths

Blackford County has strong **cultural assets** from which to draw upon.

- **Arts and Cultural Organizations** (Arts Place, Hartford City Arts Council)
- **Festivals** (Civil War Days, Rendezvous on the Reserve, Heritage Days)
- **Historical Groups** (Blackford County Historical Society, Montpelier History Club)
- **Public Libraries** (Montpelier Harrison Township and Hartford City Library)
- **Places & Spaces** (Weiler Plaza, Baldwin Park, Blackford Greenway)
- **Creative Industry, Groups, and People** (Don Rogers Photography, ADM Custom Creations, Hunt Guitars, Blue Felt Jazz Band, Blackford County Radio Club; painters, musicians, teachers, fiber artists, designers)

Blackford County has a **strong heritage** from which to draw upon.

- **Foundational History** (The Miami & Delaware Peoples, railroads, natural gas, glass production)
- **Key Assets** (Dunkirk Odd Fellows Cemetery, Godfroy Reserve; Hartford City Courthouse, Square and Historic District)

Blackford County has **strong leadership** from public, nonprofit, and community sectors.

- **Government** (Blackford County Board of Commissioners, City Councils, Mayors)
- **Civic** (Blackford County Economic Development, Montpelier Improvement Corporation, Chamber of Commerce)
- **Funders and Friends** (Blackford County Community Foundation, Purdue Extension, Blackford County Schools, Rotary)

Blackford County is **stronger together**.

“United community, we do things together”

emerged as both a guidepost and core strength throughout the engagement process. It's clear residents and leaders want to improve their community and genuinely like to work together to make it happen.



Baldwin “Airplane” Park, Montpelier



War Memorial & Guitar Sculpture, Pat McAtee, Hartford City



## Capacity & Sustainability Needs

### Blackford needs new volunteers and leaders.

There aren't enough leaders and volunteers to address community needs. Leaders and volunteers are getting older and a pipeline to identify, cultivate, and build replacements has yet to be developed for long term sustainability.

### Blackford needs to attract and retain population, particularly families.

- The population of 12,000 is declining (but projected to stabilize).
- Nearly half (48%) of the population is age 45+.
- More cultural opportunities and beautification efforts are needed to increase attachment and attract new families.

### Blackford needs to foster economic growth.

- Median household income ranks 91st in the state.

## Current Opportunities

### Blackford County has momentum.

It's dedicated to downtown revitalization, has a groundswell of successful efforts to build upon (public art, placemaking, beautification projects, façade improvement, city arts council), and several in the works that align well with goals and strategies within this plan.

### Blackford County has new and emerging resources that could be leveraged for this effort.

\$35,000,000	READI 2.0 Regional Award (ECIRP: Blackford, Delaware, Fayette, Grant, Henry, Jay, Randolph, and Wayne Counties)
\$30,000,000	Lilly Endowment College & Community Collaboration grant to Taylor University
\$10,000,000	Projected annual Wind and Solar project revenue
\$ 3,100,000	Lilly Endowment GIFT VIII grant to expand the Blackford Greenway
\$ 20,000	Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs planning grant for improved walkability in Montpelier

### Blackford County also has

- **Potential resources** coming through the READI 2.0 Lilly Endowment Initiative.
- **Myriad arts, community, and civic assets** from which to build upon, and
- **Committed leaders** driven to get results.
- **Strong local and regional plans** to drive efforts (Blackford County Comprehensive Plan, East Central Indiana Regional Partnership Plan)





Vendor, Civil War Days, Hartford City

# Goals & Strategies

## GOAL 1 CREATIVE PLACEMAKING DOWNTOWN

Blackford County's downtowns are thriving — revitalized through arts initiatives, beautification, and programming.

**STRATEGY 1.1** — Beautify all the “small” stuff for civic pride and engagement.

### 1a Façades

**Restore and activate downtown facades (including windows).**

- Provide façade grants (and help applicants throughout process).
- Partner with youth and artists to activate storefronts and vacant business with murals, seasonal art, illuminated displays, or rotating exhibits.
- Develop design guidelines to ensure an enhanced, cohesive, and attractive downtown while preserving its character *(example).*

### 1b Streets

**Develop sidewalk, streetscape, and beautification programs that create a safe, inviting, and walkable environment for pedestrians and cars alike.**

- Maintain planters, and greenspace enhancements.
- Develop alley gathering places with stringed lights, benches, murals *(example).*



## STRATEGY 1.2 — Activate with public art, partnerships, events, and opportunities to create.

### 2a Public Art **Restore and expand murals and sculptures downtown and in parks.**

- Develop public art guidelines (i.e., policies/procedures for selecting, installing, maintenance).
- Install community murals that reflect the community and for which the community participates in design and creation.
- Include murals in crosswalks (known as “asphalt art”) and alleys.
- Include fun add-ons such as selfie spots, art trails, scavenger hunt competitions.
- Cultivate project sponsors and matching grants in addition to percent for art policies to support this work.

### 2b Events **Develop community events in partnership with business, youth, and artists.**

- Explore and expand monthly and seasonal events (e.g., concerts, outdoor movies).
- Deepen value of events – encourage businesses to stay open late, create specials, etc.
- Bring 4th Friday and markets back downtown from fairgrounds.
- Develop program sponsorships (identify sponsors, create sponsor packages with benefits e.g., visibility, VIP access).

### 2c Programs **Expand spaces and opportunities for the community to create (programming).**

- Identify local partners to inform “Arts in the Parks” activities and increase participation.
- Develop programs through parks and recreation (e.g., arts activities alongside T-Ball).
- Structure “open mic” ideas (music or poetry slams, writer rounds, vinyl nights).
- Ensure a place to create exists for every community, in every community.
- Increase and better leverage existing physical spaces for visual and music activities (e.g., ceramics studio, artist studios, rehearsal/club/band jam spaces designed to fit identified needs).
- Explore partnerships with Taylor University students, clubs, faculty, etc.

## STRATEGY 1.3 — Connect activities, places, and people.

### 3a Activities **Collaborate in order to leverage and cross promote activities, events, and programs.**

- Encourage businesses and nonprofits to add programming during community events.
- Coordinate marketing and promotional efforts with key stakeholders (e.g., parks, arts, recreation, libraries) to cross promote, identify new strategies.

### 3b People **Develop messaging strategies to amplify and connect opportunities with local and regional audiences.**

- Include target audience in planning efforts, community calendars.
- Partner efforts with existing county marketing and branding efforts (e.g., branding and marketing as part of county plan).

### 3c Engage **Extend trails, create walking tours, and similar place-based initiatives that increase community engagement and tourism.**

- Tie local history themes, leverage youth input and involvement, and communicate county-wide to identify opportunities for broader, intentional impact.

## GOAL 2 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN & THROUGH THE ARTS

Blackford County's youth are thriving through the arts and civic participation.



### STRATEGY 2.1 — Increase opportunities for youth arts engagement.

#### 1a Invite In **Actively and intentionally include youth in arts projects, especially downtown.**



- Embed youth opportunities in public art, community events, beautification, parks/trails, and history activities.
- Work with schools to develop strategies to incentivize student participation in arts opportunities that benefits both schools and youth.
- Make it easy and meaningful for youth to participate, whatever the project.

#### 1b Planning **Plan activities/events at least a year out for schools/partners to meaningfully integrate them (e.g., curriculum).**

- Focus efforts so that one event has multiple reinforcing components rather than multiple separate events.

#### 1c Partners **Develop new, diverse partnerships that expand arts capacity, programming, and collaboration opportunities.**

### STRATEGY 2.2 — Increase youth access to arts.

#### 2a Info **Develop key resources to increase access to arts instruction.**

- Working jointly (Jay and Blackford Counties), create an educator inventory of local and regional arts educators who provide private and/or group instruction for youth of all ages in multiple disciplines (focusing on visual and performing arts).

#### 2b Outreach **Coordinate marketing effort to increase awareness of available opportunities.**

- Strengthen communications by evaluating current practices and testing new ones.
- Leverage existing and identify potential marketing opportunities (e.g., library newsletter, city event calendars, platforms such as [Yodel](#)).
- Leverage Portable Art Studios to both increase and promote opportunities.

### STRATEGY 2.3 — Increase youth stake in the arts.

#### 3a Empower **Create formal avenues for youth to inform and engage in civic and arts planning.**

- Develop youth councils (e.g., Hartford City Mayor's Youth Council); appoint them to committees, and invite them to public meetings.
- Actively gather and use youth feedback when looking for strategies to engage them or they are the intended audience (e.g., focus group, surveys).

## GOAL 3 CREATIVE ECONOMY & ENTREPRENEURS

All benefit from a thriving creative economy with increasing numbers of successful creative entrepreneurs and groups.

### STRATEGY 3.1 — Build support SYSTEMS & TRAINING opportunities.

**1a Empower**      **Develop a creative entrepreneur collective to cross boundaries, forge innovation and partnerships, and identify and address training needs.**

- Partner with regional efforts and those in Jay County to explore synergies and existing opportunities, identify champion, research similar collectives (e.g., Purdue Extension, John Jay Learning Center).

**1b Equip**      **Develop intentional partnerships to meet creative entrepreneurs' education, skill-building, and infrastructure needs.**

- Coalition to bridge the gap between creative industries and traditional business training, ensure robust broadband access county-wide, evaluate potential for online stores.

**1c Connect**      **Support and develop county creative entrepreneurs and businesses through increased participation in key networks and opportunities.**

- Connect creatives with business mentors, increase creative entrepreneur participation in pitch competition, increase participation in Chamber of Commerce.

### STRATEGY 3.2 — Create SPACES for creatives.

**2a Create**      **Support and expand opportunities for creatives to engage directly with the community, share their work, and expand the reach of their businesses.**

- Increase and better leverage existing physical spaces for visual and music activities. (See Goal 1, Strategy 2).
- Provide creatives opportunity to engage with community in public spaces (e.g., performances and artist demonstrations).
- Partner with local businesses to display and sell local art.

**2 Engage**      **Support and expand physical spaces for creatives to work (studios) and build their businesses (storefronts) individually and in groups.**

- Identify and develop affordable studio/workshop and/or micro-manufacturing spaces in underutilized and/or empty buildings.



Storefront Murals, Montpelier



## GOAL 4 CULTURAL IDENTITY & HERITAGE

Blackford County's identity has been strengthened through the arts, history, and community engagement.

**STRATEGY 4.1** — Reimagine and strengthen signature festival traditions – engaging the community to:

**1a Leverage**      **Leverage signature festival traditions to bolster creative economy and tourism.**

- Add arts to existing opportunities (e.g., artist booths, demonstrations, workshops, performances) – ARTify them!
- Work with artists and arts organizations to focus and increase the mutual benefits of festivals – for the arts and from the arts.

**1b Sustain**      **Develop creative solutions to sustain key events/activities.**

- Transition to new volunteers, partners, approaches (e.g., merging two similar festivals into one).
- Find new, sustainable locations for events to occur.

**STRATEGY 4.2** — Lean into Blackford County's history and heritage.

**2a Tie-Ins**      **Tie local history themes and content into Downtown and youth projects.**

- Support Kevin Ford Aerospace-themed Outdoor Park & Museum (Baldwin Park).
- Preserve/renovate architectural details.
- Use banners, wayfinding, murals to reinforce history.
- Look ahead to America 250 opportunities, identify curriculum tie ins.

**2b Specific**      **Develop specific history programming and amenities (e.g., downtown historic walking tours).**

- Gamify activities to increase involvement and tourism opportunities (Scavenger hunts, “passports”, etc.)

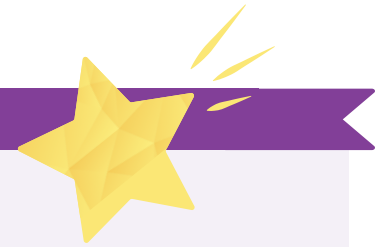


Reenactment during Civil War Days



## GOAL 5 SUSTAINED COMMITMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Arts initiatives and programming are sustained through collaboration, leadership, and long-term funding.



### STRATEGY 5.1 — Increase support for arts and culture.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>1a Councils</b> | <b>Establish or reestablish local mayoral appointed arts councils</b> to focus efforts on specific Arts Plan goals and strategies aligned with city goals.  |
| <b>1b New</b>      | <b>Integrate arts and culture into county/community promotional efforts</b> , adapting to changing interests and styles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Leverage Portable Art Studios to both increase and promote opportunities.</li></ul>  |
| <b>1c Unify</b>    | <b>Cultivate leadership and intentional cross-county collaboration</b> to address shared needs (e.g., cross promotion, event scheduling). <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Begin with the mayors as standard bearers, then expand through the libraries, Purdue Extension, schools, 4H, etc.</li><li>● Engage new business owners and individuals outside traditional networks (e.g., feature creative businesses in community promotional video).</li><li>● Encourage local businesses to incorporate arts like hanging local artwork, hosting live performances.</li></ul> |
| <b>1d Leverage</b> | <b>Expand the pool of community champions, leaders, and volunteers.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Engage local and county government leaders as advocates to publicly endorse, present, or co-present the plan to constituents.</li><li>● Use the momentum of visible progress to engage a new cohort of business and community leaders.</li></ul>  |

### STRATEGY 5.2 — Solidify long-term investment pathways for arts and culture.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>2a Affordable</b> | <b>Make them affordable to both the providers and participants</b> , embedding <u>“lighter, quicker, cheaper”</u> strategies and mindset throughout.  |
| <b>2b Public</b>     | <b>Adopt public funding strategies that demonstrate local government commitment to arts and culture while leveraging private in the same.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Specifically, develop “Percent for Art” policies, designate public funds (e.g., portion of energy revenues), and pursue public grants for arts initiatives.</li></ul> |
| <b>2c Private</b>    | <b>Cultivate a culture of philanthropy across the county</b> in partnership with the Blackford County Community Foundation.   |

**STRATEGY 5.3** — Include arts elements and arts stakeholders when implementing related existing plan strategies.

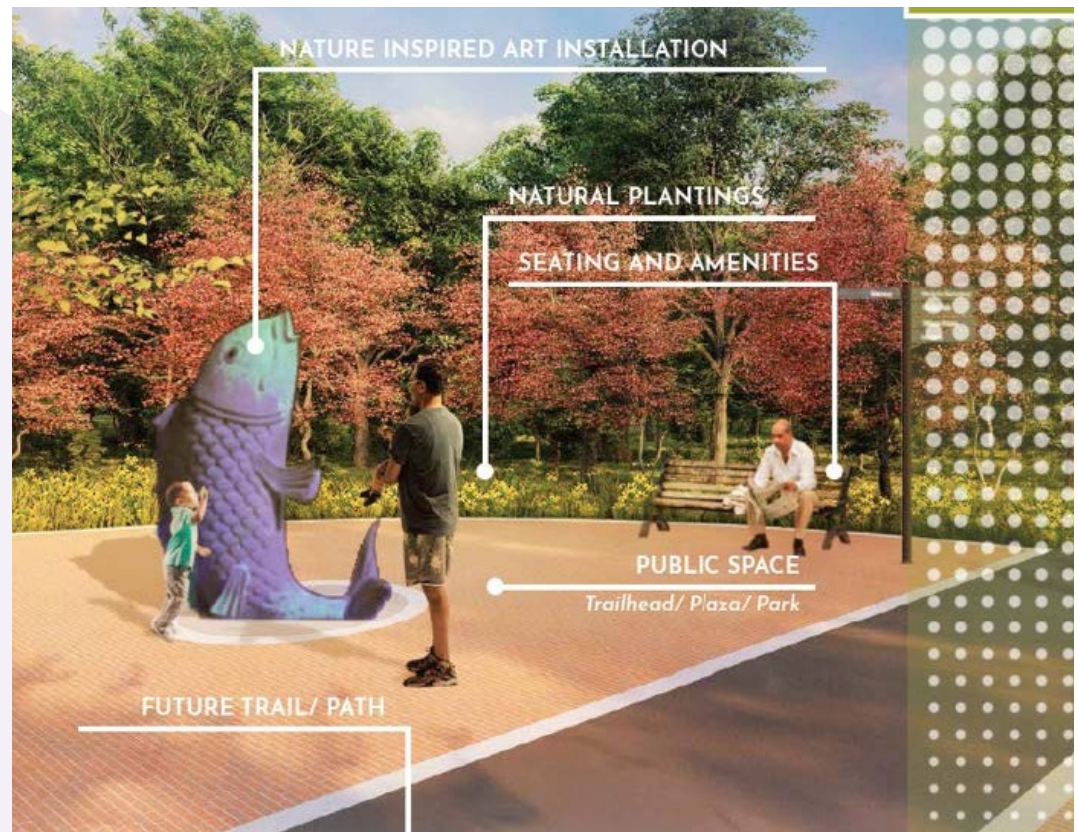
**Key Plans and Planning Processes Include:**

- Economic development and strategic investment plans
- Comprehensive plans for cities and the county
- Downtown development and revitalization plans
- Master plans for parks, trails, and recreation
- Quality of life and quality of place plans
- County and regional plans for Purdue Extension
- Plans for public libraries, community and senior centers
- Community foundation, Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, and tourism plans

**Example Below:** Catalyst project from Blackford County Comprehensive Plan to partner with Arts Place, Blackford County Schools, and local artists to expand public art programming throughout county.

## Strategy

Partner with the Arts Place to expand public art programming throughout the county.



# Recommended: Action Planning

## First Steps for Sustained Commitment & Implementation

### 1 IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

- Reconvene participants from the leadership focus group as agreed to form the base of an implementation team. ✨
- Invite in leaders from other arts and culture assets who participated in this planning process. ✍️
- Use this group to identify an individual or lead entity to coordinate its meetings and plan implementation. We recommend Arts Place and/or Purdue Extension whose work naturally aligns with this effort.

### 2 COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS & ENDORSEMENTS

- Present the plan to arts and culture boards of directors (beginning with boards connected to the individuals who helped to develop this plan) for input and endorsements.
- Present the plan with endorsements to the Blackford County Board of Commissioners, Development Corporation, Redevelopment Commission as well as City Councils for endorsement.
- Then publicize it as endorsed. This should include presentations to civic organizations (e.g., Rotary) and relevant convenings that build awareness, support, and participation for plan implementation.

### 3 ACTION PLANNING

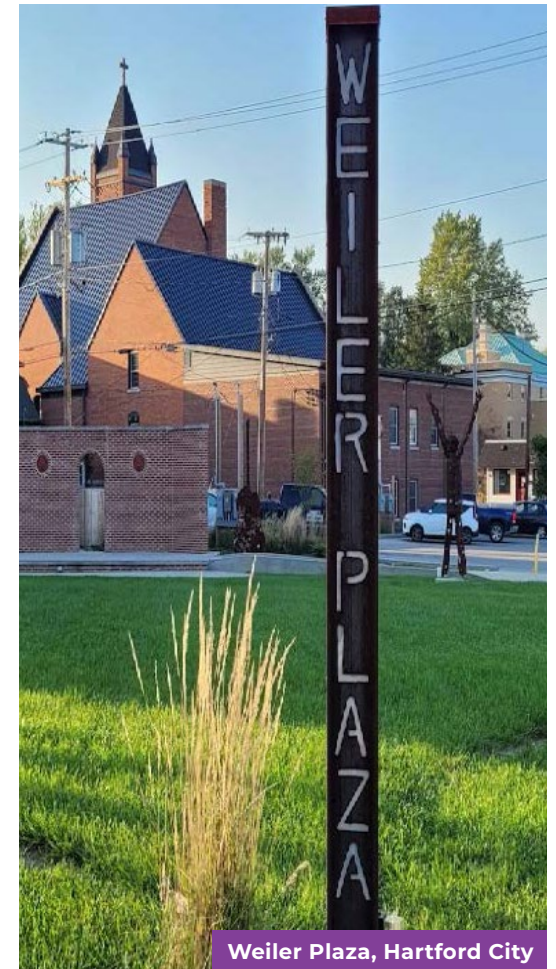
- Use regional group to convert this document and supporting materials into an action plan.
- Focus first on plans to implement:
  - i. Small, attention-getting starter projects in each of the county's cities and villages.
  - ii. Propose local Percent for Art ordinances.

### 4 SUPPORT FOR EARLY ACTION

- Secure start-up funding for early coordination and small starter projects
- Use the endorsed plan and actions as a basis to pursue financial support from the Blackford County Board of Commissioners, the cities and towns of Blackford County, and your local community foundation for initial implementation and coordination.

✨ This included representatives from Blackford County Board of Commissioners and Economic Development Corp., Hartford City, City of Montpelier, Arts Place, and a local art teacher.

✍️ **For Example:** Blackford County Historical Society, Rendezvous at the Reserve, Hartford City Public Library, Montpelier Harrison Township Public Library, Purdue Extension, Parks Department, and local artists



Weiler Plaza, Hartford City

# Next Steps Across All Goals

	2026-28 NEAR TERM	2028-30 MID-TERM	2030-35 LONG-TERM
<b>Creative Placemaking Downtown</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small, attention-getting starter projects in each city and town</li> <li>● Annual big splash initiative</li> </ul>	Begin Identify initiative / Plan	Repeat, bigger Begin	Sustain, bigger Repeat
<b>Youth Engagement In &amp; Through The Arts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educator inventory of local and regional arts educators</li> <li>● TBD from action planning</li> </ul>	Complete	Revise, recruit new	
<b>Creative Economy &amp; Entrepreneurs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner with Jay County to form regional collective</li> <li>● TBD from action planning (e.g., support needs identified by collective)</li> </ul>	Complete	Revise, recruit new	
<b>Cultural Identity &amp; Heritage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tie local history themes and content into downtown projects.</li> <li>● Local arts and culture assets to develop plans aligned with this one.</li> </ul>	Build from 2025 Encourage, begin	Revise this plan Expand in number	Plans revised
<b>Sustained Commitment &amp; Implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local government financial commitments to arts and culture</li> <li>● Percent for Art ordinances</li> </ul>	Pursue, confirm Pursue, adopt	Repeat, grow Fund use	Sustain, grow Fund use





# Appendix 1: Methodology

## Engagement Summary

**Guided by a Steering Committee representing each county, the consultant team led a broad, countywide, public input process that included:**

- A comprehensive review of existing plans from each community as available (e.g., county, city, park),
- Desk-researched and crowd-sourced compilation of a county cultural asset inventory,
- An in-person community input session for envisioning 2035 supplemented with follow up focus groups and 1:1 interviews coverings, and
- A public survey to prioritize goals and strategies.



## Community Visioning Sessions

### Auglaize, OH

December 5, 4:30–6:30  
Auglaize County Administration Building  
14 attended

### Blackford, IN

November 14, 4:30–6:30pm  
City Hall, Hartford City  
22 attended

### Jay, IN

November 13, 4:30–6:30pm  
John Jay Learning Center, Portland  
21 attended

## Focus Groups & Interviews

### Groups (8)

- **Arts Place Staff (Jay & Blackford)**  
21-Jan | virtual | 7 attended
- **Creative Industry & Entrepreneurs (Jay)**  
21-Jan | virtual | 7 attended
- **Activating Youth (Blackford)**  
22-Jan | virtual | 4 attended
- **Activating Downtown (Blackford)**  
23-Jan | Hartford City Public Library | 8 attended
- **Expanded Dialogue (Auglaize)**  
24-Jan | The Grand | 14 attended
- **Leaders (One per county)**  
10-Feb - Blackford - (6 attended)  
12-Feb - Jay - (3 attended)  
14-Feb - Auglaize (2 attended)

### 1:1 Interviews (3) with representatives from

- Community foundations
- Local economic development
- Civic leadership (mayors and county commissioners)
- Downtown revitalization efforts
- Creative and community development

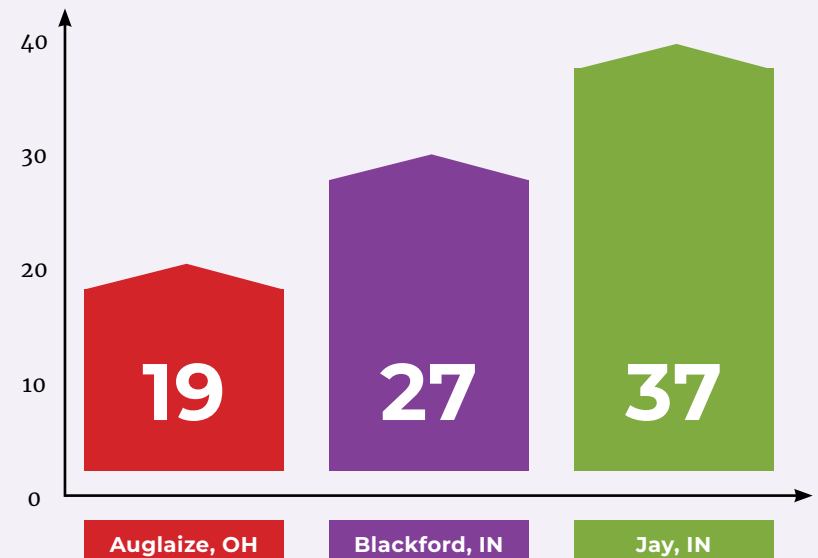
## Plans Reviewed

In addition to asset mapping and public engagement, existing plans in the community informed goals and strategies, including:

- Blackford County Comprehensive Plan
- Hartford City Park Master Plan
- Kevin Ford Aerospace Park & Outdoor Museum
- Montpelier Comprehensive Plan

## Prioritization Survey

Residents from each county completed surveys (83)



# Goal Prioritization Survey Results

Please arrange each set in priority order, top = most important to you.

OVERALL GOALS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL	SCORE
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN & THROUGH THE ARTS	7   26%	11   41%	6   22%	3   11%	27	2.81
CREATIVE PLACEMAKING DOWNTOWN	10   37%	6   22%	6   22%	5   19%	27	2.78
SUSTAINED COMMITMENT & IMPLEMENTATION	6   22%	7   26%	9   33%	5   19%	27	2.52
CULTURAL IDENTITY & HERITAGE	4   15%	3   11%	6   22%	14   52%	27	1.89
					27	= N

STRATEGIES — YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN & THROUGH THE ARTS	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL	SCORE
Increase OPPORTUNITIES for youth arts engagement	13   59%	8   36%	1   5%	22	2.55
Increase youth ACCESS to arts	4   18%	10   45%	8   36%	22	1.82
Increase youth STAKE in arts and culture	5   23%	4   18%	13   59%	22	1.64
				23	= N

STRATEGIES — CREATIVE PLACEMAKING DOWNTOWN	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL	SCORE
Beautify all the “small” stuff for civic pride and engagement	9   39%	8   35%	6   26%	23	2.13
Activate with public art, partnerships, events, and opportunities to create	9   39%	6   26%	8   35%	23	2.04
Connect activities, places, and people	5   22%	9   39%	9   39%	23	1.83
				23	= N

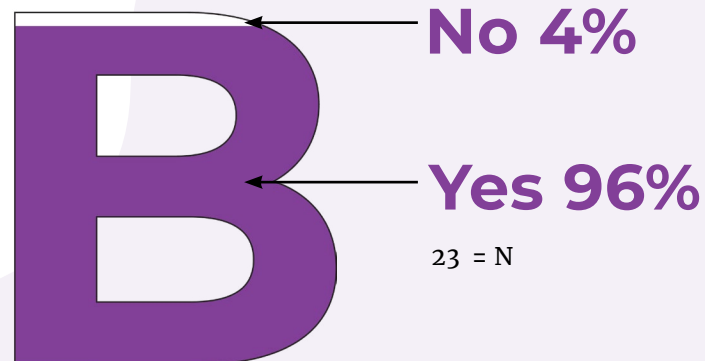
STRATEGIES — SUSTAINED COMMITMENT & IMPLEMENTATION	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL	SCORE
Increase SUPPORT for arts and culture	13   62%	8   38%	0   0%	21	2.62
Solidify long-term investment pathways for arts & culture	4   19%	8   38%	9   43%	21	1.76
Include arts elements and arts stakeholders in civic planning and when implementing existing strategies	4   19%	5   24%	12   57%	21	1.62
				21	= N

STRATEGIES — CULTURAL IDENTITY & HERITAGE	1st	2nd	TOTAL	SCORE
Reimagine and strengthen signature festivals	11   69%	5   31%	16	1.69
Lean into Blackford County's history and heritage	5   31%	11   69%	16	1.31
			16	= N

### SHOULD THE BLACKFORD PLAN INCLUDE: CREATIVE ECONOMY & ENTREPRENEURS?

All benefit from a thriving creative economy with increasing numbers of successful creative entrepreneurs and groups

- Build support SYSTEMS & TRAINING opportunities
- Create SPACES for creatives



### General Comments

I really appreciate the way this was presented and the work that has been completed to this point.

Art's Place is a great addition to our little town; however, I feel it should be made more available to organizations for their use - it sits idle too much.

Items were randomized in the survey to increase the quality of response.

# Appendix 2: Cultural Asset Inventory

Name	Type	2nd Type / Discipline	City	Notes
Hartford City Public Library	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Programs, in public library	Hartford City	Outdoor classroom
Montpelier-Harrison Township Public Library	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Programs, in public library	Montpelier	
Blue Felt Jazz Band	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Programs, in schools	Hartford City	Student group in Blackford County Schools
Bruin Pride Marching Band	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Programs, in schools	Hartford City	
Main Street Micro Studios	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Rentable Studio Space	Hartford City	Tyler & Molly Hunt, Owners
Depot Bar & Grill	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Venue, in business	Hartford City	Live music
Tyler & Nick's Lounge	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Venue, in business	Hartford City	Live music
Weiler Plaza	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Venue, in local gov	Hartford City	Plaza
Indiana Blacksmithing Association	Arts Organization	Arts Council or Assoc, NPO	Dunkirk	Mailing address only in Blackford County
Hartford City Art Council	Arts Organization	Arts Council, Local Gov	Hartford City	Hartford City Ordinance Sections 31.095 - 31.100
Arts Place, Blackford County Arts Center	Arts Organization	Community Art Ctr/School	Hartford City	Variety of programming and classes, venue, gallery
Mississinewa Valley Band	Arts Organization	Performing Arts, Music	Hartford City	Community Band
Hagios (Open) & Hagios School of the Arts (Closed)	Art in Non-Art Spaces	Studio, Film Production	Montpelier	Spencer Roller, Artist
Montpelier Civic Center	Civic Asset	Community/Sr Center	Montpelier	
Montpelier School	Civic Asset	Former School	Montpelier	City reclaiming the building
Conger Street Garden (2012)	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Hartford City	Tori's Butterfly Garden Foundation
Hartford City Wilderness Park	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Hartford City	Hartford City Park Master Plan
Horseshoe Park	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Hartford City	Remodel as part of Montpelier Comp & Park Plan
Mill Street Garden (2014)	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Hartford City	Tori's Butterfly Garden Foundation
Sigma Phi Gamma Sorority Founders Park	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Hartford City	Established 1945
Baldwin Park (Airplane Park)	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Montpelier	Kevin Ford Aerospace Park & Outdoor Museum Plan
Bicentennial Garden Downtown (1776-1976)	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Montpelier	
Blackford Greenway (2017)	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Montpelier	LEI GIFT VIII \$3.1M grant to expand by 1.32 miles

Name	Type	2nd Type / Discipline	City	Notes
Fireman's Park	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Montpelier	Kayak launch as part of Montpelier Comp & Park Plan
Godfroy Reserve	Civic Asset	Park / Trail	Montpelier	
Purdue Extension - Blackford County	Civic Asset	Purdue Extension	Hartford City	
Blackford Intermediate School	Civic Asset	School, K-12	Hartford City	
Blackford Jr-Sr High School	Civic Asset	School, K-12	Hartford City	
North Side Elementary School	Civic Asset	School, K-12	Hartford City	
Hunt Guitars LLC	Creative Industry / Artist	Craft/Traditional Artist	Hartford City	Doug & Carol Hunt (Artist/Owners)
Mont's Wood Shed	Creative Industry / Artist	Craft/Traditional Artist	Montpelier	Monte Jackson, Artist/Owner: woodwork
ADM Custom Creations	Creative Industry / Artist	Design, Graphic	Hartford City	
Sincerely Naiya	Creative Industry / Artist	Design, Graphic/Print	Hartford City	Naiya Dudleston. Artist/Owner
Daniel Bowman Jr.	Creative Industry / Artist	Literary, Author	Hartford City	"A Plum Tree in Leatherstocking Country," "On the Spectrum: Autism, Faith, & the Gifts of Neurodiversity"
Thrifty Sounds (2020)	Creative Industry / Artist	Retail, Music	Hartford City	Tim Lee & Shawn Robare, Owners
Showtime Dance Academy	Creative Industry / Artist	Studio, Dance	Montpelier	Sarah Johnston, Owner
Bad Penny Design	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist	Hartford City	
Lynette K. Waters-Whitesell	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist	Hartford City	Lynette K. Waters-Whitesell, Artist/Owner
Cyber Clown Co	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist, Fiber	Hartford City	Kendall Hess, Artist
DLS Jewelry Designs	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist, Jewelry	Hartford City	Diana Seelig (Artist/Owner)
MJ Creations	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist, Jewelry	Montpelier	
Don Rogers Photography	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist, Photographer	Hartford City	Don Rogers, Owner
Naiya Dudleston Photography	Creative Industry / Artist	Visual Artist, Photographer	Hartford City	Naiya Dudleston, Artist/Owner
Cornuelle Veterans Tree Lighting Festival	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Nov,
Hartford City Civil War Days	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Oct, Blackford Co. Civil War Reenactment Club
Heritage Days of Hartford City	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Summer,



Name	Type	2nd Type / Discipline	City	Notes
Holiday Bazaar & Farmer’s Market	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Nov,
Rendezvous on the Reserve	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Sep,
Santa’s Depot Craft Show	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Nov, Tri Kappa
Summerfest (2013)	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Hartford City	Summer,
Hometown Christmas		Annual (festival, fair)	Montpelier	Dec, 4H
Montpelier Jamboree (1945)	Events & Traditions	Annual (festival, fair)	Montpelier	Sep,
Arts in the Parks, Hartford City	Events & Traditions	Recurring Series	Montpelier	Summer, Arts Place (Provider)
Art Classes in the Park	Events & Traditions	Recurring Series	Montpelier	Summer, free classes taught by local residents
Art in the Park Family Fun Day	Events & Traditions	Recurring Series	Montpelier	Summer, Tori’s Butterfly Garden Foundation
Arts in the Parks, Montpelier	Events & Traditions	Recurring Series	Montpelier	Summer, Arts Place (Provider)
Main Street Friday Nights	Events & Traditions	Recurring Series	Montpelier	Mult,
Fourth Fridays at the Fairgrounds	Events & Traditions	Regular (1st F, market)	Hartford City	Mult, Arts in the Parks (Site)
Montpelier Chamber of Commerce	Funders & Friends	Chamber	Montpelier	
Blackford County Economic Development	Funders & Friends	Economic / Improvement	Hartford City	
Blackford Development Corporation	Funders & Friends	Economic / Improvement	Hartford City	
Build A Better Blackford	Funders & Friends	Economic / Improvement	Hartford City	
Urban Forest Greenscape Commission	Funders & Friends	Economic / Improvement	Hartford City	
Montpelier Improvement Corporation	Funders & Friends	Economic / Improvement	Montpelier	
Blackford Band Boosters	Funders & Friends	Friends & Volunteers	Hartford City	
Rotary Club of Hartford City	Funders & Friends	Friends & Volunteers	Hartford City	
Tori’s Butterfly Garden Foundation	Funders & Friends	Friends & Volunteers	Hartford City	
Blackford County Historical Society	History & Heritage	Historic Society	Hartford City	
Montpelier Historical Society	History & Heritage	Historic Society	Montpelier	
Blackford County Courthouse	History & Heritage	Historic, Building	Hartford City	
First Presbyterian Church	History & Heritage	Historic, Building	Hartford City	

Name	Type	2nd Type / Discipline	City	Notes
Dunkirk Odd Fellows Cemetery	History & Heritage	Historic, Cemetery	Dunkirk	
Blackford County Civil War Reenactment Club	History & Heritage	Historic, Club	Hartford City	Hartford City Civil War Days
Montpelier History Club	History & Heritage	Historic, Club	Montpelier	School-based (G4), Grace Community Church (Host)
Hartford City Courthouse Square Historic District	History & Heritage	Historic, District	Hartford City	
Veterans Garden and War Memorial	History & Heritage	Memorial Garden/Park	Hartford City	
Blackford Amateur Radio Club	Informal Group	Media	Hartford City	Amateur Radio
Soccer Kids in front of Flag	Public Art	Mural	Hartford City	unk, Unknown, Paint
Imagined Businesses	Public Art	Mural	Montpelier	unk, Southerland, Paint
Airplane (Baldwin Park)	Public Art	Other	Montpelier	unk, Unknown, Artifact
Bison-Tennial Bison	Public Art	Sculpture	Hartford City	2016, Blackford HS Students, Fiberglass
Franklin (praying mantis)	Public Art	Sculpture	Hartford City	unk, Pat McAtee, Metal (parking lot across from library)
The Spirit of the American Doughboy	Public Art	Sculpture	Hartford City	1920, E. M. Viquesney, Copper
War Memorial & Guitar	Public Art	Sculpture	Hartford City	unk, Pat McAtee, Metal (Veterans Garden)
Gingerbread Men	Public Art	Sculpture	Montpelier	unk, Unknown, Wood
Miami Indian	Public Art	Sculpture	Montpelier	1960, Unknown, Fiberglass
Soldier	Public Art	Sculpture	Montpelier	1945, W.A. Hoover,
Wildwood Outdoor Escape	Misc. Opportunity	Attraction	Hartford City	Sport
Montpelier Motor Speedway	Misc. Opportunity	Attraction	Montpelier	Nightly races May-Oct, one of oldest in state (1903)
Montpelier National Bank Building	Misc. Opportunity	Attraction	Montpelier	Site of 1933 Dillinger robbery, now antique store
Granny's Bloomers Flowers & Gifts	Misc. Opportunity	Craft Product	Hartford City	
Northside Greenhouse	Misc. Opportunity	Craft Product	Hartford City	
Sister Pâtisserie	Misc. Opportunity	Craft Product	Hartford City	
JJ's Divine Creations	Misc. Opportunity	Craft Product	Montpelier	
JJ Newberry Building	Misc. Opportunity	Economic / Improvement	Hartford City	
Blackford County 4-H	Misc. Opportunity	Youth Opportunity	Hartford City	
Hartford City Youth Council	Misc. Opportunity	Youth Opportunity	Hartford City	Hartford City Ordinance Sections 31.075 - 31.080

# Appendix 3: Resources

## Implementation Guides & Ideas

### Arts Impact Data Sources

- Americans for the Arts: [Arts & Economic Prosperity](#), [Impact Explorer](#)
- US Bureau of Economic Analysis: [Arts & Culture Data](#)
- A [treasure trove of resources](#) from the National Endowment for the Arts
- Pattern & Pathways Strategies: [Embracing A Culture of Creativity: Indiana's Overlooked Economic Engine](#)
- [Indiana Communities Institute](#): How Indiana Municipalities Are Utilizing Local Arts & Culture in Their Community & Ec. Dev. Strategies
- Indiana Arts Commission: [Impact Points for Indiana's Cultural Districts](#)
- SMU DataArts: [Arts Vibrancy 2024](#) (includes county-level detail)

### Grant Programs

- Bloomberg Philanthropies [Asphalt Art Grant Program](#)
- National Endowment for the Arts [Our Town](#)
- Indiana Arts Commission [Project Support](#) and [Creative Convergence](#)
- Indiana Humanities [Action, INcommon, Historic Preservation Education](#)
- IHCD [CreatING Places Crowdgranting Program](#)
- Indiana Destination Development Corporation [Placemaking Grants](#)

### Public Art Guides, Templates & Networks

- Putnam County Mural Project: [Strategies for Public Art: A Guide to Creating Engaging Public Art with your Indiana Community](#)
- [Asphalt Art Guide & Safety Study](#) (Bloomberg) and [Baltimore Toolkit](#)
- Sample Guidelines from [Madison](#) and [Fort Wayne](#)
- Sample Plans from [Bloomington](#) and [Plainfield](#)
- [Resources](#) gathered by the Indiana Arts Commission
- [Templates](#) from the Public Art Archive
- ABA: [1st Amendment Limitations on Government Regulation of Artwork](#)
- Online collections and artist connections: [CODAworx](#), [PublicArtArchive](#)
- Americans for the Arts [Public Art Network](#): professional development, tools resources, and listserv

### Creative Placemaking Guides & Ideas

- Project for Public Spaces [definition](#) and [deeper resources](#)
- Creative placemaking is [strengthening communities with arts as the core](#)
- USDA: ["Rural America Placemaking Toolkit"](#)
- NACo: [Creative County Placemaking Initiative](#) with resources
- Where can I find implementation ideas?
  - [Ideas from the Indiana Arts Commission](#)
  - Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper [explained and explore examples](#)
  - Better Blocks [free open-source designs](#)
  - Our Town [treasure trove](#) from past NEA projects
  - Americans for the Arts [database of projects](#) from across the country

# Case Study Samples

Rushville, IN; Population, 6,187

## Sample Percent for Art Ordinance

Excerpted from the City of Rushville Zoning Ordinance (edited for space) *ARTICLE IV OVERLAY DISTRICTS A. CORRIDOR OVERLAY 9. Site Design Standards.*

### d. Public spaces and community art

- i. For the purposes on this section construction costs are expenses incurred by a contractor for labor, material, equipment, financing, services, utilities, etc., plus overhead and contractor profit. Construction costs do not include cost of land, architectural design, consultant, and engineering fees.
- ii. This section is not applicable to façade renovations, or interior remodel/renovations confined to the existing building footprint.
- iii. **New Construction.** (1) Proposed developments or projects where the lot area is greater than 40,000 sf shall contribute to the enhancement of the community and its public spaces by providing enhancements that are aesthetically consistent with the development standards set out in the corridor overlay district.
- iv. Each proposed development or project shall contribute to the establishment or enhancement of the community and public spaces by providing at a minimum two (2) of the following: (1) Landscaped patio/seating area; or, (2) Pedestrian plaza with benches; or, (3) Window shopping walkway; or, (4) Outdoor playground area; or, (5) Water feature, not related to required detention or retention ponds; or, (6) Architectural elements as part of the primary entrance; or, (7) Another deliberating shaped area or focal feature or amenity that, in the Planning Office Staff, or Rushville Board of Public Works adequately enhances the environment, public spaces or aesthetic quality of the development.
- v. If the developer of the proposed project wishes in lieu of providing any item listed in (iv) above, may choose to contribute to the City of Rushville's Art Commission as follows: (1) Based on  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the total construction cost of the project, but not less or greater than (A) or (B): A. If  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of total construction cost is less than \$1,000 the total contribution shall not be less than \$1,000 B. If  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of total construction is greater than 10,000, total contribution shall not exceed \$10,000.
- vi. **Additions to existing buildings.** (1) Proposed addition(s) equal to or greater than 5,000 sf shall contribute to the enhancement of the community and its public spaces by providing enhancements that are aesthetically consistent with the development standards set out in the corridor overlay and are useable by the public. (2) Each proposed development or project shall contribute to the establishment or enhancement of the community and public spaces by providing at a minimum one (1) of the following  
*[repeat of language from section iv. Above]*
- vii. If a developer of a proposed projects wishes in lieu of providing any item listed in (vi) above, may choose to contribute the City of Rushville's Art Commission as follows: (1) Based on  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the total construction cost of the project, but not less or greater than (A) or (B): A. If  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of total construction cost is less than \$500 the total contribution shall not be less than \$500; B. If  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of total construction is greater than \$1,000, total contribution shall not exceed \$5,000.
- viii. In lieu of (iv) or (vi) above the proposed development or project for new construction or additions may wish to contribute to the purchase of art on behalf of the City of Rushville's Art Commission. (1) The estimated value of proposed art to be purchased is to have an estimated value of: A. New Construction: lot area equal to or greater than 40,000 sf: \$10,000. B. Addition(s): equal to or greater than 5,000 sf: \$5,000. (2) Proposed art to be purchased shall be as follows: A. Develop a design; B. Present proposed design, including estimated value to the City of Rushville's Art Commission; C. Present City of Rushville's Art Commission approved design and estimated value to the Planning Office Staff.
- ix. A plaque will be affixed to the art purchased by the developer or designated person(s) in recognition of their contribution. (1) Public art shall be displayed in a location that is visible from U.S. Highway 52, State Road 3 or State Road 44 or other crossing streets or a public plaza.



## Sample Design Standards

Excerpted from Winchester's (Randolph County) Comprehensive & Strategic Investment Plan

Originated from City of Rushville Zoning Ordinance, *ARTICLE IV OVERLAY DISTRICTS A. CORRIDOR OVERLAY*

Some cities, like Rushville, incorporate design guidelines directly in their zoning ordinances. Rushville's design guidelines appear in their section regarding its Corridor Overlay District, which consists of land visible and accessible from several high traffic roads (State Road 3, State Road 44, and U.S. 52). This is done to encourage "efficient land use, promote coordinated development, permit innovative site designs, establish development standards and preserve the integrity of the roadways within the corridors," (Rushville, IN., Municipal Code § K(2)(a)). The code includes general design standards some including:

- v. **Architectural design standards.** (b) Entry features. Entryway features shall be required at the primary entrance to the structure and shall include at least three (3) of the following design elements:
  - i.) Raised corniced parapets over the door, peaked roof forms having an average slope greater than or equal to a minimum 5:12 pitch, arches, or architectural details such as tile work and moldings that are integrated into the building structure and design;
  - ii.) Integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting;
  - iii.) Enhanced exterior lighting such as wall sconces, building mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights. (1) Pedestrian facilities.
    - a.) A continuous, delineated pedestrian route network no less than six (6) feet wide, that continues from the perimeter public sidewalk to the primary customer entrance of all primary buildings on the site shall be provided.

Another provision is that of materials used on non-residential front facades in the district. Permissible materials in Rushville's Corridor Overlay District are:

Brick or face tile; Wood; Native stone; Glass, provided that reflective glass is limited to a maximum of 50% of the area of any façade wall on which the glass is used; Tinted and/or textured concrete masonry units such as split face block and burnished block; Tilt-up concrete panels that are adorned or textured; Architectural pre-cast concrete; Architectural metal; Exterior insulation and finishing system; or, Fiber cement board.

Rushville's approach to Design Guidelines is one that is metered; affecting no other district but its Mainstreet Overlay. This means that the weight of impact the guidelines carry on quality of place is more so determined by location within the city than on the overall design of the city. Winchester may draw from the specificity of requirements or the broadness of rationale for adoption of guidelines such as Rushville's.

# THANK YOU!

Finally, thanks to the many community members who participated in the planning process. You made the plan happen!



## Acknowledgements

### Blackford County Board of Commissioners

**John Lancaster** | President

**Dan Borgenheimer** | Vice President

**Laura Coons**

### Project

#### Coordinator & Fiscal Sponsor

**Carolyn Carducci**, *Arts Place, Inc.*

#### Steering Committee

**Dan Borgenheimer**, *Blackford County*

**Dan Hammond**, *Blackford County*

**Doug Horn**, *Jay County*

**Mike Medler**, *Jay County*

**Chris Noble**, *Auglaize County*

**Doug Spencer**, *Auglaize County*

#### Consultants

**Sara Peterson Consulting**

**Sharp Visionarts**

#### Funders

Thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for funding this project as a part of the Our Town Program, and to the community leaders who matched those funds:

- Auglaize County Board of Commissioners
- Blackford County Board of Commissioners
- Jay County Board of Commissioners
- City of Montpelier
- The Portland Foundation
- St. Marys Community Foundation

#### Supporters

Thanks to the community leaders who supported the grant proposal:

- Travis C. Richards, Jay County Economic Development Corporation
- Jeremy W. Gulley, Jay School Corporation
- Patrick J. McGowan, Mayor, City of St. Marys
- John Boggs, Mayor, City of Portland
- Dan Eckstein, Mayor, Hartford City
- Mike Medler, Arts Place Corporate Board

### Blackford County, Indiana

110 West Washington Street, Hartford City, IN, 47348

<https://www.blackfordcounty.com>